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ANGLO-CATHOLICISM AND THE UNIVERSITIES MISSION TO CENTRAL AFRICA

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Anglo-Catholicism and the Universities' Mission to Central Africa in the Twentieth Century

Striking is the extent to which even in 2011 certain areas near to but nevertheless still beyond Westminster Abbey remain as recognisably ecclesiastical enclaves. Beyond Dean's Yard and Church House are myriad administrative and other buildings of the Church of England. On Tufton Street are situated, variously, Faith House (of the Society of the Faith), Wippell's Church Furnishers and Clerical Outfitters, and, at no. 15, the former head office of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Across the road is Mary Sumner House, headquarters of the Mothers Union. Close by, sheathed in scaffolding, polythene, and board is a building site: 35 Great Peter Street. On the internet is a website devoted exclusively to that building project. There the developers offer for sale 'nine luxury apartments, including a deluxe penthouse, designed and delivered to a standard that will rival anything in the world'. 35 Great Peter Street itself, the website continues 'has a fascinating pedigree; designated as a building of merit, it sits on the edge of the Smith Square conservation area. Nearby buildings include two notable houses by Edwin Lutyens'. The building is now being 'sensitively developed to offer the best in modern living yet still retain [*sic*] all its elegance. The unique gable end features are of particular note'.[1]

No less striking in its way is the extent to which the hyperbole of the twenty-first century London property developer necessarily differs from the description afforded the building by its original owners and occupiers, the Universities' Mission to Central Africa: 35 Wood Street (as Great Peter Street was then named) possessed a 'striking frontage' at the time of its completion in 1928, but, the mission avowed, 'there will be nothing extravagant about it... The chapel... will be panelled in oak and furnished suitably. This is the only room in the building which can be charged with extravagance, and the extra

[1] http://www.35greatpeterstreet.com/site/index.html

cost of this has been met by a special donation of a member of the Committee'.[2]

It was the fourth and final London address that the UMCA would occupy, and the second purpose-built headquarters (the first such building had been at Dartmouth Street, also in London SW1). There had been much deliberation as to where the new headquarters should be sited: after searching central London, the mission decided that 'it could not do better' than buy the freehold of 35 Wood Street, 'opposite our old friends of the SPG'. No special appeal for funds had been necessary; the building costs were met from a contingency fund and from the sale of the former headquarters freehold. At the opening ceremony, the senior treasurer expressed the hope that the new office would make for increased efficiency, and also for increased comradeship, among staff and visitors alike. The UMCA was intent above all on emphasising links between London and the overseas 'mission field'. It named the building 'Central Africa House'. And for its front it commissioned a stone tablet, inscribed as follows: 'UMCA, St Bartholomew's Day 1928. This stone was placed in position in memory of St Bartholomew's Day 1865, when the first fruits of the mission were baptised in Zanzibar. Deo Gratias.'

Among Protestant missionary societies in Britain, the UMCA was by no means unique in wishing to publicly honour its past, and its origins. This emphasis on continuity both accorded with and complemented the senior treasurer's 1928 emphasis on comradeship, on community. Such things mattered greatly. In a book prepared three decades later for the mission's centenary, its general secretary emphasised its strong 'sense of fellowship, both with those who have gone before and with contemporaries in the Mission'.[3] At that time – the late 1950s – the UMCA faced great challenges to the continuity of its work overseas: straitened financial circumstances; shortage of recruits; African

[2] Universities' Mission to Central Africa, *Central Africa* XLVI (1928), 178. The street was given its present name in 1940.
[3] Gerald W. Broomfield, *Towards Freedom* (London: UMCA, 1957), 103-4.

nationalism; changing practices in and attitudes towards imperial and colonial authority in those parts of Africa where the mission operated. Yet according to the general secretary, Canon Gerald Broomfield, 'the work of the Mission was begun and was carried on in the face of almost impossible difficulties'. How so? It was, he wrote, by the 'self-dedication, the courage and endurance, nay, the heroism of those earlier days'. Who now, Broomfield asked, 'follows in their train' now that the mission had reached what he described as 'a new phase in the struggle' for Christ and for the church in Africa?[4]

In its past, and in its sure and certain vision of that past, the UMCA appeared reasonably secure. It appeared secure also in certain important physical respects: its headquarters building, which had survived the Blitz almost unscathed, eventually outlived the mission (and at least in part, or in spirit, still outlives it). In central Africa new churches were still being planned, and built: the most remarkable of these, not least for its modernist styling, is the Cathedral of the Holy Cross at Lusaka, begun in 1957 although not completed until 1970. These projects acknowledged the past, but looked also to the future. And continuity was evident too in the mission's terms of service. These owed little to contemporary norms, for they remained largely as they had been since the late nineteenth century: Broomfield informed his readers that 'missionaries serve without salaries, receiving no more than their needs on a simple scale... they undertake to remain unmarried while they are members of the Mission, and to obey their Bishop and those set in authority over them by him'.[5] The mission extolled the heroic self-sacrifice of its earliest members. What it required of new recruits, whether ordained or lay, male or female – and also, it must be emphasised, of African clergy – was hardly less demanding, even in the 1950s.

It is arguable whether in the 1950s one needed to be heroic to succeed as a missionary in Africa, either for the UMCA or any

[4] Broomfield, *Towards Freedom*, 133.
[5] Broomfield, *Towards Freedom*, 104.

other agency. But heroism was certainly valued. One biographer of Trevor Huddleston, who administered as bishop a UMCA diocese in Tanzania, has written of Huddleston that 'religious, social and political commitment could still [in the 1950s] lead to greatness, could call forth dormant qualities of self-sacrifice in unlikely places, could change lives'.[6] In 1959, the historian and Anglican layman Hugh Tinker wrote that in order truly to connect with local people in non-western countries, foreign workers from the West should live simply, in conditions 'partially reminiscent of the life of a settlement officer in the old Indian civil service or of a pioneer Christian missionary'.[7] This is what the UMCA sought still to do, in a period of political and racial upheaval in Britain's African colonies (as in the colonies of other European states) and in South Africa. How useful, how valid at this time and in those places was a continuing religious emphasis upon simplicity, community, obedience, discipline, heroic self-sacrifice, celibacy? Huddleston was arguably an exception, saintly if flawed (as saints must somehow be). He inspired many, among them the Methodist minister Colin Morris who, having read Huddleston's 1956 bestseller *Naught for Your Comfort*, determined upon a career in mission. The book's focus was South Africa, apartheid and the church. The situation in British colonial Africa, where were located UMCA dioceses, was quite different, and Morris found Huddleston a poor guide to its political and racial complexities and ambiguities.[8] The situation in colonial Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania and other parts of Africa was undergoing unprecedented change in the late 1950s. Missions and churches were adapting, or being forced to adapt, to new, unforeseen circumstances. The UMCA largely cleaved to its vision of an unchanged, unchanging Africa. That vision, along with distinct and distinctive theological orientation and terms of missionary service had after all sustained the mission for an entire century: might it not also do so well into the future? In the event, the UMCA continued after its centenary to exist as a distinct,

[6] Robin Dennison, *Trevor Huddleston, A Life* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 70.
[7] Hugh Tinker, 'The Name and Nature of Foreign Aid', *International Affairs*, 35, 1 (1959), 43-52.
[8] Colin M. Morris, *The Hour after Midnight: A Missionary's Experience of the Racial and Political Struggle in Northern Rhodesia* (London: Longman's, 1961), 2-15.

discrete organisation for a mere seven years. On 1 January 1965 it amalgamated with the SPG to form USPG, the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

It would be wrong to suggest that in the process the UMCA became effaced from history. But its ethos and activities now became incorporated into those of an organisation similarly focussed on overseas mission but with a longer and arguably more varied history (the SPG was formed in 1701). The most recent institutional histories of the mission date from the 1950 and early 1960s. These, like their predecessors, were written by insiders and provide informative but uncritical accounts of people and events.[9] They are largely a record of endeavour and achievement. The UMCA finds a place in Daniel O'Connor's tercentenary history of USPG, published in 2000.[10] As yet, however, there is no full-length scholarly history of the mission. That is not to say that historians are uninterested in the UMCA. However, they have focussed mainly on the mission's engagement and interaction with African peoples and with aspects of British imperialism.[11] These approaches offer some of the best ways of exploring its activities. They can also facilitate exploration of the things that mattered so much to the mission, its history, its presence in Africa and as a link between England and Africa, and, not least, its identity as an Anglo-Catholic missionary organisation not only in a period of British overseas and imperial expansion during the nineteenth century, but also during the twentieth century and a period of imperial retrenchment and decolonisation. It is in that latter vein that Andrew Porter, who has written on the history of the UMCA, suggests that it deserves our attention: '... its difficulties and distinctive features provoke important comparative questions. In particular, an investigation of the UMCA certainly raises, and

[9] A.G. Blood, *The History of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, Vol. 2: 1907-32* (London: UMCA, 1957); *Vol. 3: 1933-57* (London: UMCA, 1962).
[10] Daniel O'Connor *et al*, *Three Centuries of Mission: The United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 1701-2000* (London: Continuum, 2000).
[11] For instance, Justin Willis, 'The Nature of a Mission Community: The Universities' Mission to Central Africa in Bonde', *Past & Present* 140 (1993), 127-54; Andrew Porter, 'The Universities' Mission to Central Africa: Anglo-Catholicism and the Twentieth Century Colonial Encounter', in Brian Stanley (ed.), *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire* (Grand Rapids, MI, and Cambridge, 2003).

may help to illuminate, that most central of issues, the extent to which the theology and ecclesiastical traditions of particularly missionary societies either helped or hindered them in approaching the transition from the world of colonial rule to that of the newly-independent African state.[12]

The mission came into being as a result of David Livingstone's appeal in 1857, for others to take up work that he had begun in Africa. The universities responded; notably Cambridge and Oxford but also London and initially also Durham, and Dublin. In late 1859 was formed the Oxford and Cambridge Mission to Central Africa, which thereafter became the UMCA. Its promoters, men of the high church party in the Church of England, took inspiration from the contemporary experience of westward expansion into the United States. They looked to particular individuals as leaders, 'missionary bishops' capable of building up the church from nothing and of operating independently of any state.[13] The first such bishop, Charles Frederick Mackenzie, a veteran at 35 of church affairs and church controversy in South Africa, was consecrated bishop at Cape Town on 1 January 1861. Onward he then went to central Africa (to what is now Malawi) and further difficulties involving African slaves and slave traders. He managed somehow to escape death, the official history tells us, following attack by a crocodile.[14] But he succumbed to fever hardly a year after his consecration. Other men followed from England and, based at Zanzibar from 1863, the mission made progress, slowly. In 1892 were created in one go two dioceses, of Nyasaland (Malawi) and of Zanzibar. A further diocese, of Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), was formed in 1910. Zanzibar's boundary was altered twice, in 1926, to form Masasi and in 1952 to form southwest Tanganyika (Tanzania), five dioceses in all.

[12] Porter, 'The Universities' Mission', 80.
[13] Cited in Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 226.
[14] A.E.M. Anderson-Morshead, *The History of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa: Vol. I: 1859-1909* (UMCA: London, 1897: 1955), 12.

The purpose of the mission was to support the work of those dioceses. It did so through fundraising, recruitment, training, publishing (such as of the journal *Central Africa*) and publicity. It maintained a network of contacts that extended far beyond its head office, to encompass parishes and dioceses in England and overseas. All this was done in the service of African dioceses and their bishops, the leaders of the mission. In bishops were vested authority, and hope. They played an important role not only in Africa, but also while on furlough in England, through personal appeals for funds and recruits and through involvement in the recruitment process itself.

UMCA bishops represented a particular view of episcopacy, modelled on ideas about the early church: the bishop as apostle, with the urgent requirement of church (and congregation)-building. As one bishop put it: 'The Episcopate... is essential to the Church's life, and Bishops are the organs through which the mystical Body functions'.[15] The right order of church expansion meanwhile was not, as a later Anglo-Catholic writer put it: 'Christ – faithful individuals – the Church; but Christ – the Church – faithful individuals... The visible Church is part of the Gospel'.[16] While it presented difficulty and danger, so Africa also appeared to offer opportunity for Anglo-Catholics faced with prejudice against ritualism, as represented by, among other things, the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874. For of course the UMCA as it grew embodied and indeed represented the Catholic element within the Church of England. And while that movement aimed to catholicise the church (although by what means few ever appeared to agree for long), in its missionary aspects it aimed to combat apathy and irreligiousness and to generate enthusiasm for Christ.[17] It emphasised ceremony and ritual and the imbuing of a 'simple' faith. For many of those who would go to Africa, as priests, bishops or lay workers, preaching experience gained in English slums therefore proved extremely influential: it encouraged

[15] H. Maynard Smith, *Frank, Bishop of Zanzibar, 1879-1924* (London: SPCK), 165
[16] Cited in W.S.F. Pickering, *Anglo-Catholicism: A Study in Religious Ambiguity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 70.
[17] Pickering, *Anglo-Catholicism*, 26-8.

both high-mindedness and humility. It did more than that, though; it stimulated unease and anxiety about the consequences for humanity and church of industrialisation, of urbanisation, of 'civilisation' and also of empire. And it was in Africa – the place of evangelistic opportunity, as it seemed – that Anglo-Catholic unease and anxiety about western civilisation found deepest expression.

Edward Steere, bishop of Central Africa, 1874-1882, had worked with and for the poor in England. In an address to an 1877 Oxford conference on missions he declared: 'Civilisation... is a great and powerful instrument put into our hands for the benefit of those who are now outside its pale, but it is an instrument only and one that is capable of working fearful mischief if we make it substantially our object to raise a civilised nation, rather than a holy Church'.[18] According to another UMCA bishop, Chauncy Maples, this might entail a kind of transformation; he wrote in 1882 that 'the European missionary must become an African to win Africans. He must, so far as is consistent with his Christian principles, assimilate himself to them'.[19] Some missionaries did so, becoming regarded in the process, even by their fellows, as seers, or living saints, or eccentrics. The most notable example was probably William Percival Johnson (1854-1928). Yet distancing from late nineteenth century civilisation, and imperialism, might go only so far. Operating in parts of south-central Africa (present-day Malawi and Mozambique) contested by European states, the UMCA accepted that civilisation of the British imperial variety was for all its faults preferable to that of the Germans, or the Portuguese.

These contrasting and yet somehow complementary environments – English slums and 'uncivilised' Africa – did a great deal to shape the ideas and career of the man who most clearly links the early history of the UMCA with that of its later, twentieth century aspects: Frank Weston, bishop of Zanzibar,

[18] Cited in Porter, *Religion versus Empire?*, 228.
[19] Cited in Porter, *Religion versus Empire?*, 231.

1908-1924. London-born, educated at Dulwich College and Trinity, Oxford, Weston was ordained priest in 1895. He then took two slum curacies in London; the second of these was at St. Matthew's, in Great Peter Street, Westminster. His personality was mercurial, to say the least. His biographer, who knew him as a friend, wrote: Frank 'reached heights and plumbed deaths of spiritual experience which are altogether beyond me'.[20] He could be over-sensitive, even prickly; he was equally capable of graciousness and generosity. He was 'always a little afraid of women'.[21] He was hard on himself and on those who worked with and for him. Weston first came properly to attention outside the mission in 1913, when he launched an attack both intemperate and unreasonable on discussions that had taken place at Kikuyu, Kenya, on the subject of church co-operation and intercommunion. No decision was reached on these matters. That did not stop Weston (who had not been in attendance) from protesting to the Archbishop of Canterbury, alleging heresy and schism. The archbishop succeeded in resolving the matter, although not without difficulty.[22] During the First World War Weston organised and commanded an African carrier corps. He denounced German imperialism for its excesses and shortly after the war meted out similar treatment to the government of the United Kingdom, for its attitude towards forced labour recruitment among Africans.

In 1919 Weston travelled to England on furlough, and to attend both the Lambeth Conference and the first Anglo-Catholic Congress. According to his biographer, delegates at Lambeth had expected 'a wild and blatant man from the back of beyond, intolerant and intolerable. Some expected a thin-lipped dyspeptic who would pronounce anathemas with the grim satisfaction of an Inquisitor in melodrama'. But Weston was charm personified, and more. The Bishop of Worcester (Edward Pearce) was apparently smitten by what he later described as '... a well-set up Apollo – if you can conceive the

[20] Smith, *Frank, Bishop of Zanzibar*, viii.
[21] Smith, *Frank, Bishop of Zanzibar*, 16.
[22] Smith, *Frank, Bishop of Zanzibar*, 147-62.

god in a purple cassock, and wearing a considerable pectoral cross'.[23]

An Anglo-Catholic Congress had been mooted in 1914 (if not earlier). But not until after the war was it possible for planning to begin in earnest. The first congress began with high mass at St Alban's, Holborn, in June 1920. The Bishop of Salisbury preached the sermon, stating that the congress was not meant to be 'an armed demonstration, or a controversial challenge'. Rather was it a display of Anglo-Catholicism's intent 'on the evangelization of the world, the maintenance of the faith, and the conversion of the nation to Christ'.[24] Weston chaired the first session, at a packed Albert Hall (the only building sufficiently large to accommodate the audience, of laity as well as clergy). There another bishop, of Zululand (Wilmot Vyvyan), appealed for recruits to the UMCA. 'Too many young priests nowadays were marrying', he said, 'and thereby limiting the sphere of their activity in the ministry'.[25] It is not easy to precisely evaluate the success of this appeal; but the congress succeeded in raising more than £25,000 for the work of the mission.

The congress marked the true inauguration of what the sociologist William Pickering has described as 'a triumphal period' for Anglo-Catholicism, marked especially by Anglo-Catholic congresses. According to Adrian Hastings, '... Evangelicalism [had not proven] a very comforting religion in the trenches; Anglo-Catholicism fared better with its sacramental objectivity and its prayers for the dead'.[26] In the aftermath of war there remained among the British public a yearning for certainty and reassurance, in matters of faith as in much else. There was yearning too for individuals who might help to provide this, or at least to provide guidance as to how it might be attained. Veterans of Christian evangelism in English slums and in Africa such as the priests and bishops of the

[23] Smith, *Frank, Bishop of Zanzibar*, 227.
[24] *The Times*, 30 June 1920, 11.
[25] *The Times*, 30 June 1920, 11.
[26] Adrian Hastings, *A History of English Christianity, 1920-1985* (London: Collins, 1986), 80.

UMCA seemed well fitted to the task and none more so than Weston, who would play a greatly more significantly role at the second congress, of 1923, than he had at the first.
Weston had tremendous presence, as a person and as a speaker, and those attributes were everywhere present during the congress proceedings. So too were other personal attributes, of prickliness, and impulsiveness. At the second session Weston referred to the church's endowments and on its income from stocks and shares, from land, from mineral royalties. Rather than press Anglo-Catholic bishops on the subject of incense or tabernacles, he asked, might critics not also ask questions about church income derived from 'injustice and from sweating'.[27] It had been at the inaugural session, however (again at the Albert Hall), that he provoked real and lasting controversy – with a message to the Pope (which, he subsequently admitted, was entirely his own idea): 'Sixteen thousand Anglo-Catholics, in congress in London, beg to offer their reverent greetings to the Holy Father, humbly praying that the day of peace may quickly break'. The Benedictine monk Dom Anselm Hughes was present, and subsequently offered the following description of what ensued: 'In a split second the cry could be heard arising from floor to ceiling; while on the platform could be observed sundry representatives of the Episcopate responding in varying shades of their habiliments; the reddish and pinkish soutanes clapping and cheering wildly, the violet and purplish cassocks clapping, but not too hard or too long; and one suffragan clad in navy blue hardly at all, apparently not approving but not caring to manifest disapproval'.[28] The message, including its address to 'the Holy Father' proved too much to take, even for many Anglo-Catholics.

But the congress showed other sides to Weston also, notably in his closing address. Here he restated the Anglo-Catholic emphasis on service and endeavour, and on humility and obedience: 'Fix your eyes upon... Jesus, the naked Christ... that

[27] *The Times*, 12 July 1923, 14.
[28] Dom Anselm Hughes, *The Rivers of the Flood: A Personal Account of the Catholic Revival in England in the Twentieth Century* (London: The Faith Press, 1961), 69-70.

you shall live simple lives, that you shall fight against luxury, that you shall encourage the rich to set a limit to the amount of money that they will use upon themselves, that they will do it, not under pressure from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but out of personal devotion to him, Jesus'.[29] 'You have got your Mass, you have got your Altar, you have begun to get your Tabernacle. Now go out into the highways and hedges where not even the Bishops will try to hinder you. Go out and look for Jesus in the ragged, in the naked, in the oppressed and sweated...'[30]

Weston then returned to Africa, where he died little more than a year later, aged only 53. So successful had been the congress, and so stirred (if not shaken) had been many Anglo-Catholics by Weston, that they saw him as a future leader of the movement in England. Weston had very different ideas. He was to say the least ambivalent about the country of his birth. In 1919 he had confided to a correspondent that 'Rome and [the] Church of England both seem so disloyal to the Master in respect to the real things of life. I feel sometimes that to breathe Christ-air, I must drop out of institutions, and live the simple life in simple Africa'.[31] The pull of Zanzibar (for all the flaws that Weston identified it as possessing) was irresistible. In any case, Weston was temperamentally ill equipped for ecclesiastical leadership in England. He was too combative, too unpredictable, and too dictatorial. Service as a missionary bishop might accentuate such tendencies, especially the last.

Writing in 1944 on mission and on bishops, the UMCA general secretary observed that 'The government of the Church cannot be democratic in the normal sense, because the ministry was instituted and commissioned by Christ'. It must nevertheless be constitutional, 'because the Church also has an authority

[29] The Bishop of Zanzibar, 'Our Present Duty', in *Report of the Anglo-Catholic Congress* (London: The Society of SS Peter & Paul, 1923), 181-2.
[30] The Bishop of Zanzibar, 'Our Present Duty', 186.
[31] Cited in Geoffrey Rowell, *The Vision Glorious: Themes and Personalities of the Catholic Revival in Anglicanism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 183.

derived from Him'.[32] Andrew Porter has noted within the UMCA a phenomenon necessarily absent from other missions, that of 'episcopal authoritarianism no less real for being expressed in terms of service and the Christian family of Anglo-Catholic theology'.[33] Weston exemplified this tendency. Obedience and discipline were matters to be discussed, but not questioned. Weston informed one English audience in 1923: 'I have been a Bishop for fifteen years, and I do not think I have ever asked a Priest simply to obey my opinion; but I always beg of them – and they listen – that when we are agreed that *this* is Catholic, and *this* is useful, and *this* is what is needed, then they obey. Even if they do not agree, they obey'.[34] Linked to certainty in terms of obedience was the necessity of faith unchanging and unchangeable: 'To put it quite clearly', Weston said, our present duty as Anglo-Catholics is to make a far deeper surrender to our Lord Christ, and to make it over a far wider area than ever before... were he to choose to come on earth to reign in his own person, neither you nor I would find it necessary to alter the principles upon which we conduct our work, our prayer our worship... Were he to come, our principles would not require to be altered'.[35] These ideas would prove immensely influential on an important although curiously understudied aspect of Anglo-Catholicism, overseas mission to Africa in the late imperial period and the period of decolonisation and end of empire.

Can the Second World War be seen as anything other than a time of upheaval, for individuals and for institutions – even in Africa? The UMCA appears to have been less affected than other mission agencies, because of its relatively limited geographical focus. The mission had no presence in east Asia, south Asia or the Middle East and North Africa. In January 1940, bishop of Nyasaland Frank Thorne admitted to being 'half-ashamed' at 'sitting in inglorious ease and security in Africa' while colleagues in London lived with the ever-present fear of destruction and death. 'It is you at home, not we out

[32] G.W. Broomfield, *Constitutional Episcopacy* (London: SPCK, 1944), 3-4.
[33] Porter, 'The Universities' Mission', 93.
[34] The Bishop of Zanzibar, 'Our Present Duty', 184.
[35] Cited in Pickering, *Anglo-Catholicism*, 53.

here', Thorne wrote, 'who are enduring hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ'.[36] What did worry Thorne were the harmful effects upon Africans in Nyasaland of wartime aggrandisement by white settlers – Rhodesians. For years they had lobbied for greater autonomy from Britain, and for the amalgamation of Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) with its northern counterpart (now Zambia). Like other bishops, Thorne maintained a paternalistic concern for Africans. This might engender gratitude among Africans, who compared one bishop to that bravest and most indomitable of beasts, the warthog.[37] It might also (and did) engender the sensation of being patronised, of being informed but rarely if ever consulted, even on diocesan matters.

The early, nineteenth century, progress of the mission had been slow, and the primary focus in the mid-twentieth century was on continuity, and stability. To be sure, the depression years of the 1930s had affected the UMCA as it had all such institutions. Missionaries fretted about the effects upon their work of financial retrenchment and lack of recruits. They worried too about secularism, and about nationalism, in Africa, China and India. But the church remained, and there remained much work to do; for how long it was impossible to tell. 'Why should we grow impatient at the apparently slow progress of man's achievement in the mission field?', asked the journal *Central Africa* in 1939. 'Rather should we be filled with joy at the progress made...'[38] Responding to an Anglican colleague's expression of concern about the post-war situation, UMCA general secretary Broomfield displayed nothing if not equanimity: '... the whole future of the Church, of Christianity and of civilization has, at various times in its history and in various countries, appeared just as much in jeopardy as it does now in Africa, and yet the Church has always survived, and I believe it always will just because it is a divine institution'.[39]

[36] Rt Rev. Frank Thorne, diocesan report, 6 Jan. 1940, Lambeth Palace Library, London, MS 3122.
[37] John Weller, 'The Influence on National Affairs of Alston May, Bishop of Northern Rhodesia, 1914-40', in T.O. Ranger and John Weller, eds., *Themes in the Christian History of Central Africa* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1975), 208.
[38] UMCA, *Central Africa* LVII, 1 (1939), 1-2.
[39] Cited in Porter, 'The Universities' Mission', 94.

In the immediate aftermath of the war, it was indeed difficult to predict what the following years, never mind decades, might bring. Some British missionary societies anticipated a period of evangelistic advance, in which men and women, freed from the necessity of wartime national service, would seek new challenges, and new vocations, in mission overseas. These recruits did not materialise. There was no injection of what might be termed fresh blood. In the case of the UMCA this might not have counted for much in any case. Ecclesiastical, diocesan authority remained in the hands of the bishops, some of whom, consecrated before the war, would go on to serve into the 1950s and even the 1960s. Yet to an extent that Broomfield (or anyone else) could hardly have comprehended, the two decades after 1945 would bring change of unprecedented magnitude to Africa and to the mission, culminating in its disappearance as a separate entity and amalgamation with the SPG.

How and why did this happen? An institution such as the UMCA that placed such heavy reliance upon nineteenth century terms of mission service, upon doctrinal orthodoxy and continuity and upon episcopal authority proved insufficiently adaptable to the changed circumstances of the 1950s and early 1960s. The pressures upon the mission were manifold, as they were upon all missions in Africa during that period. But, committed to a narrowly Anglo-Catholic view of mission, of church and also of state and empire, the UMCA was slower than missionary societies of other denominations to acknowledge and respond to the African clamour for political change.

Central Africa, wherein were located the UMCA dioceses of Northern Rhodesia and of Nyasaland, was the site of one of the most acrimonious controversies of post-war British imperialism. That controversy focused on the formation in 1953 of the Central African Federation, composed of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland. The British government, in conjunction with Rhodesian leaders, constructed it against African wishes, as a

bulwark against Afrikaner nationalism emanating from apartheid-era South Africa. Bishop Thorne articulated African unease, to no avail. He accepted the validity and legality of the Federation. In 1953 he wrote to the Anglican priest Michael Scott, who had attempted without success to rouse African opposition: 'I am opposed to that scheme... and to the way it has been carried through in the teeth of African opposition, but I cannot hold that it is contrary to the law of God... and that is the only justification for civil disobedience'.[40] For the mission's general secretary Gerald Broomfield, the Federation held out the promise of stability lacking in other parts of Africa. Within the new imperial entity, the UMCA might continue to work gradually but insistently towards greater societal and racial equality – towards 'confidence between the races... within the Christian fellowship'.[41] This did not occur. Bishops instead became preoccupied with liturgical and other related matters intended to reinforce the distinctiveness of Anglo-Catholicism within the church. Ostensibly important in that specific context, these deliberations had no wider relevance. The reluctance of bishops to engage with political matters of intense concern to Africans in their diocese meanwhile left them out of touch, and objects of criticism. Incapable of wishing harm on anyone, Thorne was nevertheless unwilling to involve Africans in discussion even on mundane (if nonetheless sensitive) issues such as the future of the mission's steamboat. This made him appear aloof, heavy-handed, and even autocratic.[42]

As African opposition to British imperial policy intensified in the 1950s, Gerald Broomfield at Central Africa House could not but ponder the implications for the mission's future of the situation in which it now found itself. To one parish priest he wrote in 1958, with a hint of desperation, that 'It is a tragedy that Africans should blame the Church for Federation... The

[40] Thorne to Rev. Michael Scott, 1 July 1953, Bodleian Library of African and Commonwealth Studies, Rhodes House, Oxford, Scott papers 79.
[41] Canon Gerald Broomfield, memo, 'Central African Federation', Dec. 1952, Bodleian Library of African and Commonwealth Studies, Rhodes House, Oxford, UMCA papers SF139.
[42] Charles M. Good, Jr., *The Steamer Parish: The Rise and Fall of Missionary Medicine on an African Frontier* (Chicago, IL, University of Chicago Press, 2004), 208-10.

Church had nothing whatever to do with the proposals for Federation'.[43] He was by now being subjected to requests from supporters of the mission, and from the press as to the mission's attitude towards African demands for political self-determination. The mission had no attitude as such; only the bishops could speak for it, as for their diocese. And this they were unwilling to do. In 1959 Broomfield wrote to a fellow-Anglican not of the UMCA, but with experience of Africa, Rev. John V. Taylor, of the Church Missionary Society (which pursued a much more activist agenda, on political matters). Broomfield sent Taylor a draft article that he planned to publish, on the situation in Central Africa. Taylor's response was extremely critical; he adjudged the UMCA not only seriously deficient in its awareness of African sentiment but also deficient in self-awareness. In its refusal to condemn discrimination against Africans, and to support African aspirations, the church in central Africa was itself 'involved in the guilt'. The church must prepare itself to ask forgiveness of the African people.[44] At Broomfield's invitation, Taylor addressed the UMCA annual meeting later that year, on the issue of church and politics in Africa. Gradually Broomfield became reconciled to the view that in the face of British and Rhodesian 'betrayal', African resistance, even in violent form, was at the very least understandable.[45] No longer could bishops expect to speak for Africans. Africans would speak for themselves.

In a recent history of UMCA medical work in colonial Malawi, Charles M. Good, Jr. describes the mission's stance on this controversial matter as one of 'cowardice'.[46] That is a harsh verdict on an institution with a long history of advocacy for the interests of Africans. That advocacy did not, however, extend to the granting of greater responsibilities (or even adequate stipends) to African clergy, even in the 1950s. The continuing insistence on celibacy proved damaging to the mission, notably

[43] Broomfield to Rev. V.R.D. Hellaby, 10 Nov. 1958, UMCA papers SF139.
[44] Rev. John V. Taylor to Broomfield, 20 April 1959, UMCA papers SF139.
[45] G.W. Broomfield, *1960: Last Chance in the Federation* (London: UMCA, 1960).
[46] Good, *The Steamer Parish*, 417.

in terms of the loss of female medical staff.[47] Although bishops were now more likely to acknowledge such difficulties, in such circumstances episcopal authority might itself seem a weakness, even a liability: the financial affairs of the Nyasaland diocese were mismanaged during the 1950s, to almost disastrous effect.[48] Before the end of the decade, the complicated process that would end in amalgamation with the SPG was already underway. Andrew Porter writes that 'only if the spirit of Bishop Weston could be exorcised could the UMCA and the Anglo-Catholic tradition it represented retain its significance for the growth of the church in Africa... with the creation of the Province of East Africa in 1961, the UMCA lost its formal role in the appointment of bishops; the bishops as diocesans lost the title of head of mission, and with it much of their formal control over the mission and its funds'.[49]

'Today it is almost impossible to imagine the excitement and the publicity'. So Donald Gray has written of the 1927-28 Prayer Book controversy.[50] That description might equally be made of the 1923 Anglo-Catholic Congress, so enlivened by the presence of Frank Weston. Other congresses would follow, testifying to the strength of Anglo-Catholicism during the inter-war period. I have not wished to focus unduly upon Weston in this lecture. His contradictory nature might be made to equate too readily with the much longer history of the mission that he served. To be sure, the Anglo-Catholic party (or parties) within the Church of England engaged at times, as Weston sometimes did, in a kind of spiritual warfare. And Geoffrey Rowell, in assessing Weston's protest against the Kikuyu discussions of 1913, describes 'an impressive theological statement of the relation of church, ministry, and sacraments and their Incarnational grounding' that was nevertheless also 'shrill and representative of a narrower understanding of Catholic order than [was]

[47] Linda Kumwenda, 'Healing, Conflict and Conversion: Medical Missions in Northern Rhodesia, 1880s-1954', School of Oriental and African Studies/University of London PhD thesis, 2004), 120-30.
[48] Kumwenda, 'Healing, Conflict and Conversion', 232-61; Rt Rev. Donald Arden to A.H. Pike, 10 Sept. 1962, UMCA papers SF29xvi.
[49] Porter, 'The Universities' Mission', 104-5.
[50] Donald Gray, 'The 1927-28 Prayer Book Crisis, 2: The Cul-de-sac of the 'Deposited Book'... until further order be taken', *Joint Liturgical Studies* 61 (2006), 21.

warranted'.[51] Given Weston's nature as well as his learning, those varied aspects might somehow co-exist in one person. It is similarly possible to see the Universities' Mission to Central Africa as beset by contradictions unresolved, and irresolvable. Yet while they ultimately contributed to a loss of impetus after 1945, those tensions contributed also to a not inconsiderable longevity.

In a recently published history covering two centuries of missionary activity from Britain, Jeffrey Cox characterises missions as for the most part 'institution builders' that bequeathed sometimes awkward and contested legacies, not only to parts of Africa but to other countries also.[52] Institutionally, the history of the UMCA may still be read in physical form, in cathedrals in Zanzibar, in Zambia, in Malawi. In London are many churches (such as St Matthew's) where may be seen evidence of links with UMCA. It seems likely that when 35 Greater Peter Street is finally divested of its protective covering, the name 'Central Africa House' and the dedication stone will become visible once more. Apart from the frontage little else is likely to remain. The last tenant of the building, before its sale in 2008, was the law firm Winckworth Sherwood. While vacating, they kindly allowed me to look around. On the first floor was a large room, the decor of which might even then have been deemed extravagant given the oak panelled walls and, on the ceiling above, a cross embossed in plaster.

[51] Rowell, *The Vision Glorious*, 183.
[52] Jeffery Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700* (New York: Routledge, 2008).